

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY EA/K:JDFORBES;S/P:JKALICKI:CHG

APPROVED BY EA - MR HABIB

PM - MR VEST

S/P - MR BARTHOLOMEW

EA - MR GLEYSTEN

OES - MR DEVINE

C - MR. SHINN

EUR/RPE - MR. SWARTZ

S/S MR. ORTIZ

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O R 312227Z DEC 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SEOUL IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION IAEA VIENNA

S E C R E T STATE 305630

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: MNUC, PARM, KS, CA, FR

SUBJECT: ROK NUCLEAR REPROCESSING

REF: A. SEOUL 9928; B. SEOUL 9929; C. SEOUL 9961; D. STATE
302043; E. STATE 299089

1. WE HAVE CAREFULLY REVIEWED ROKG POSITION AS PRESENTED
IN YOUR MEETING WITH PRESIDENTIAL CHIEF SECRETARY KIM CHONG
YOM, AS WELL AS YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS. KIM'S STATEMENT OF
ROKG WILLINGNESS TO RECONSIDER REPROCESSING ELEMENT OF
FRENCH NUCLEAR CONTRACT AND TO CANCEL REPROCESSING DEAL

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WHEN SATISFIED WITH US RESPONSE TO ROK NUCLEAR REQUIRE-

MENTS IS ENCOURAGING. AS YOU INDICATE, ROKG HAS PROBABLY DECIDED IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO PROCEED WITH REPROCESSING FACILITY UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. WE ALSO AGREE THAT THROUGH KIM WE ARE NOW DEALING FOR PRACTICAL PURPOSES WITH PRESIDENT PARK ON THIS QUESTION, ALTHOUGH YOU SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE PREPARED TO APPROACH PARK IF NECESSARY TO OBTAIN ROK AGREEMENT TO CANCEL PLANT.

2. WHILE WE APPRECIATE THE ROKG PROPOSAL'S FACE-SAVING ADVANTAGES, WE DO NOT WISH TO ALLOW THE ROKG TO POSTPONE A DEFINITIVE REVERSAL OF ITS POSITION ON REPROCESSING PLANT PENDING SATISFACTORY OUTCOME OF BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS

ON FUTURE CIVIL NUCLEAR COOPERATION. FROM OUR STAND-POINT, IT REMAINS VERY IMPORTANT TO FORESTALL ROKG ATTEMPTS EITHER TO EXTRACT INCREASING US COMMITMENTS OR TO ALLEGE INADEQUACIES IN US PROPOSAL PRIOR TO KEY DECISION WHETHER TO CANCEL. FROM STANDPOINT OF KOREA'S CIVIL NUCLEAR PROBLEMS, IT WOULD ALSO SEEM IN ROKG INTEREST TO FACILITATE EARLY CANADIAN NUCLEAR AGREEMENT AND CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL OF KORI II CREDITS, BOTH OF WHICH COULD WELL BE FURTHER JEOPARDIZED BY SUBSTANTIAL DELAY IN DECISION TO CANCEL. FROM FRENCH AND CANADIAN STANDPOINTS, LENGTHY BARGAINING EXERCISE TO DEFINE SCOPE OF FUTURE US NUCLEAR COOPERATION WOULD CARRY OVERTONES OF SEEKING COMMERCIAL ADVANTAGES FOR OURSELVES, CONTRARY TO ASSURANCES WE HAVE PROVIDED PARIS AND OTTAWA. ALSO, WE COULD NOT REASONABLY EXPECT CANADIANS TO READILY DELAY IMPLEMENTATION OF CANDU REACTOR PROJECT BY AS MUCH AS SIX MORE MONTHS AND WOULD BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE RISK OF MOUNTING PRESSURE ON THE GOF TO CARRY OUT REPROCESSING DEAL.

3. WE THEREFORE WISH TO AVOID EXTENDED BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS ON POSSIBILITIES FOR FUTURE PEACEFUL NUCLEAR COOPERATION PRIOR TO ROKG AGREEMENT TO CANCEL FACILITY. WE BELIEVE THAT US HAS ALREADY CLEARLY INDICATED ITS WILLINGNESS TO REVIEW WITH ROKG KOREAN REQUIREMENTS IN NON-SENSITIVE NUCLEAR AREAS AND THAT YOUR APPROACHES HAVE PROVIDED ROKG SATISFACTORY ASSURANCES TO THIS EFFECT

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WHICH SHOULD PERMIT EXPEDITIOUS DECISION TO CANCEL, A CONCLUSION WHICH YOU SHOULD UNDERLINE.

4. ACCORDINGLY, YOU SHOULD MEET WITH KIM SOONEST TO REPLY TO ROKG PROPOSAL FOR DISCUSSIONS. YOU SHOULD INDICATE THAT YOU FULLY REPORTED YOUR DECEMBER 26 MEETING TO WASHINGTON AND HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED TO REPLY AS FOLLOWS:

-- THE USG APPRECIATES AND WELCOMES ROKG DECISION TO
RECONSIDER REPROCESSING ASPECT OF ITS CONTRACT WITH FRANCE

-- WE ALSO APPRECIATE ROKG RECOGNITION OF SERIOUSNESS OF
OUR CONCERNS AND OF MAJOR BEARING THIS ISSUE HAS ON
FUTURE OF OUR OVERALL RELATIONSHIP.

-- AS WE HAVE INDICATED PREVIOUSLY, WE ARE PREPARED TO
HAVE US EXPERTS DISCUSS WITH THE ROKG HOW ITS FUTURE
NON-SENSITIVE NUCLEAR REQUIREMENTS CAN BEST BE MET. HOW-
EVER, WE CANNOT PROCEED WITH KORI-II OR ENTER INTO SUCH
DISCUSSIONS UNTIL THE ROKG HAS DECIDED TO CANCEL ITS
REPROCESSING PLANT CONTRACT.

PON ROKG CANCELLATION WE ARE PREPARED TO SEND
QUALIFIED USG PERSONNEL TO DISCUSS WITH ROKG THE POSITIVE
ASPECTS OF FUTURE US-KOREAN PEACEFUL NUCLEAR COOPERATION
AS LISTED PARA 2 REF D. WE DO NOT INTEND, HOWEVER, TO
SEEK TO REPLACE NON-SENSITIVE NUCLEAR COOPERATION BETWEEN
ROK AND FRANCE AND CANADA. (FYI: WE DO NOT REPEAT NOT
WISH TO COMMIT OURSELVES BEYOND THIS GENERAL FORMULATION
WITH RESPECT TO PROSPECTIVE DISCUSSIONS WITH ROKG. AT
THIS STAGE WE WOULD ENVISAGE SUCH TALKS AS LIMITED TO AN
INFORMAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS INCLUDING PRELIMINARY DIS-
CUSSIONS OF POINTS ENUMERATED PARA 2 REF D. MEETINGS
WOULD SERVE TO FOCUS IN MORE PRACTICAL TERMS NON-SENSI-
TIVE KOREAN NUCLEAR REQUIREMENTS, BUT WOULD NOT INVOLVE
AUTHORITY TO MAKE SPECIFIC PROPOSALS. ANY SUCH EXCHANGE
WOULD BE STRICTLY PRELIMINARY IN NATURE AND WOULD BE
LIMITED TO LISTENING TO ROKG EXPLANATION OF ITS REQUIRE-
MENTS AND ELABORATION OF SPECIFICS UNDER PARA 2 REF D.
END FYI.)

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-- ROKG SHOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THAT EXTENDED DELAY IN
REACHING A FINAL DECISION ON OUR REQUEST MAY ADVERSELY
AFFECT PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS BI-
LATERAL NUCLEAR COOPERATION WITH THE ROK. PERCEPTIONS
THAT KOREA IS SEEKING AN INDEPENDENT CAPABILITY TO PRO-
DUCE PLUTONIUM HAVE ALREADY RESULTED IN ADVERSE PRESS AND
CONGRESSIONAL COMMENT. PROSPECTS FOR CONGRESSIONAL AP-
PROVAL OF THE KORI-II LOAN ARE BETTER IF ROKG DECISION
TO CANCEL FACILITY PERMITS EXIM REQUEST TO BE MADE AS
SOON AS POSSIBLE.

-- WE HOPE TO RECEIVE A FAVORABLE RESPONSE TO OUR REQUEST
AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

-- (IF KIM RAISES SOVEREIGNTY ARGUMENTS). DECISION TO

ACQUIRE OR CANCEL REPROCESSING PLANT IS ONE SOLELY FOR ROKG TO MAKE. TO EASE THIS DECISION, THE US HAS MADE A SERIOUS OFFER TO DISCUSS EXPANSION OF OUR COOPERATION IN NON-SENSITIVE AREAS. THE U.S. HAS MADE ITS POSITION CLEAR AND WILL BE AWAITING AN EARLY ROKG DECISION TO CANCEL SO THAT OUR COOPERATION IN PEACEFUL NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT CAN CONTINUE.

5. WE INTEND TO INFORM FRENCH AND CANADIAN EMBASSIES HERE IN GENERAL TERMS OF OUR REPLY TO ROK PROPOSAL. IN MEETING WITH FRENCH, WE WILL NOTE THAT ROKG HAS TOLD US THAT IT HAS NOT BEEN APPRISED BY GOF OF LATTER'S ATTITUDE TOWARD CANCELLATION. ROBINSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION, NUCLEAR REACTORS, CONTRACTS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 DEC 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: SmithRJ
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE305630
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: JDFORBES;S/P:JKALICKI:CHG
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X3
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750451-1089
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975123/aaaaachk.tel
Line Count: 182
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 76 SEOUL 9928, 76 SEOUL 9929, 76 SEOUL 9961
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: SmithRJ
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02 APR 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <07 OCT 2003 by SmithRJ>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ROK NUCLEAR REPROCESSING
TAGS: MNUC, PARM, KS, CA, FR, US
To: SEOUL
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006